July/93

Fascism: What it is and how to fight it

"The struggle against fascism does not begin in the liberal editorial office, but begins in the factory and ends in the street." (Leon Trotsky)

Gunalan Muthulingam, after being savagely beaten by Nazi thugs, has now died in the hospital. The recent racist attacks against Tamil refugees in Toronto have sounded the alarm for many who had previously thought the "reemergence" of fascism was a strictly European phenomenon. Like their counterparts throughout the "First World," the local interbreed of Nazi scum have begun an organized and systematic campaign of race terrorism against those who they consider to be most vulnerable. (Anti-Asian racism, imported with English colonialism, has been a hallmark of Canada since its inception.)

The semispontaneous resistance to the marked growth in fascist activity has drawn militant youth of all races and nationalities into the struggle. Anti-Racist Action (ARA), a group formed last fall to confront Wolfgang Droege's "Heritage Front," has organized a series of sizeable mobilizations, and for that reason has been the focus of considerable media attention. Many people are for the first time seriously asking themselves: What <u>is</u> fascism?

As in the 1930s, an international economic crisis rocks the imperial heartlands as mass unemployment plagues the urban industrial centers. Fascism, the end product of capitalist decay, feeds off the desperation of an increasingly disenfranchised section of society that sees no other way out. Its slogans, its banners and its ideology are but the tainted mask of the frenzied petit bourgeoisie. Though the ruling class prefers bourgeois democracy as a more smooth and efficient means of maintaining control (and hence its rate of profit), it may eventually be compelled, out of fear of widespread revolt and in defence of its own interests, to sacrifice its direct political rule and opt for fascism.

If the rising tide of racist terror is not properly understood, it cannot be properly combatted. History has passed its verdict on those who would dismiss fascist organisations as "irrelevant" or part of the "lunatic fringe." The Heritage Front and its gang of white lumpen losers are growing <u>by the day</u>. As the economic crisis deepens and society becomes increasingly polarized, the fascist filth have begun to crawl out of their holes. They must be stopped. The question is, how?

Peaceful/Legal Strategy: A Dead End

"We're looking for results and results are only found in the judicial system." (Gerda Frieberg, Canadian Jewish Congress)

After each ARA antifascist mobilization, the bourgeois media has shepherded a host of "respectable citizens" to come forward to denounce the "violence" of the demonstrators, and has even obscenely lumped them together in the same camp as the Nazi rabble. Apparently a few ARA supporters have likewise become disillusioned with the confrontationist strategy and are seeking a more peaceful means of stopping them. But the peaceful/legal strategy of the reformist left is based on the belief that the state can or will thwart the rise of fascism if only it is pressured enough to do so. This is a dangerous pacifist illusion. The state is not some neutral arbitrator for abstract "justice" but an instrument of class rule. As such the capitalist state not only turns a blind eye to fascist terror but in times of acute crisis actively encourages it. It is the oppressed who are the victims of fascism, and it is the oppressed who, with the direction of the organized and integrated labor movement, can and must stop it.

Another tactic used by the peaceful/legal types is to "expose" the fascists in the courtrooms. Not only does this give the Nazis a forum to spew their hate but it also coincides very nicely with the fascists' demands for their "right to free speech." "White Power" and Neo-Nazi ideology is not a matter for critical evaluation nor debate. These racist murderers are driven not by the logic of their ideas but by the logic of a system in crisis.

Centrality of the Working Class

There is a prevailing myth on the left that the organized working class or the union movement is a "privileged" layer that will not defend the interests of the "less privileged" (i.e., women, minorities, and gays and lesbians). The bureaucratic misleaders of the unions, the real privileged layer, have in their own way given credence to this myth and only offer very tight lip service to the fight against racism. This is not an accident. As "labor lieutenants of capital," the union bureaucrats act as agents of the bosses in the workers movement and therefore put their local/parochial interests before those of the class as a whole, their episodic off-key outbursts of "Solidarity Forever" notwithstanding.

Under capitalism, the proletariat is only a class for exploitation. Even the apparent higher standard of living is rapidly being eroded through wage freezes and cuts and tax ripoffs, not to mention unemployment. It is in the interest of workers to wage a fight against fascism because it represents the naked class rule of the bosses. Secondly, the organized working class is racially integrated, so it remains a significant obstacle to the Nazis' plans for a "New Order." Making the link between the unions and the specially oppressed sectors of society is key to the struggle against fascism. The organized working class is the only oppressed sector which has both the objective interest and the social power to lead the struggle to crush and defeat the Nazi scum.

Ultimately the struggle against fascism is a struggle to overturn the capitalist system that gave rise to it. This requires the forging of a Leninist party, rooted in the working class, which will act as a tribune of the oppressed, addressing the concrete issues of the day.

We by no means would disparage militants for venting the just rage these creeps deserve. But as the recent police sweeps on radio stations and demonstrations attest, the state is a very powerful institution and is hardly "neutral." It is clear that more than courage and determination are necessary to win the upcoming battle for our workplaces, our streets and our future. Mobilizing the ranks of labor is not a token gesture of "anti-fascist unity" but a burning necessity. The militant ARA mobilizations have sometimes put the Nazis on the run but they will keep coming back. The lessons of history are there for all to learn. Only by linking the struggle against fascism to the need for a workers revolution will that struggle be won once and for all.

Drop all Charges against ARA Militants!
No Free Speech for Fascists!
For Labor/Minority Mobilizations to Smash Nazi Terror!

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